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# Perspective

## Daniel

By Larry Urbaniak

The book of Daniel is a fascinating book which records much about both the life of its author and amazing prophecies. Many believe it was written by Daniel himself during the Babylonian captivity and the reign of Cyrus the Great in the sixth century. There is, however, a different school of thought that dates this book to the middle of the second century BC. Many commentators took this point of view which means many of the prophetic predictions made in Daniel had already been fulfilled before being written. Therefore they are not authentic prophecies but merely recorded historical events.

When and where did this idea come from? (Much of my information comes from an archaeological article written by Daryn Graham.) It seems that the concept first came from a pagan philosopher named Porphyry. He wrote in the third century AD and claimed that the author of the book of Daniel was not known and that the book did not actually contain prophecy. Porphyry had a typical Greco-Roman cultural outlook at that time which was definitely a common anti-Jewish bias. He apparently did not consult with any Jewish philosophers or authors before rejecting the possibility that the predictions in Daniel were for real.

On the other side of this debate about when Daniel was written is some other evidence and interesting points:

Point one: Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, did accept Daniel as the real author of the book named after him. Josephus verifies this is his book Antiquities (10.10f).

Point two: The Essenes who wrote and lived at Qumran just prior to the time of Jesus also strongly believed in the writing and prophecies of Daniel. More than once in their group's writings and commentaries they obviously accepted the scriptural authenticity of Daniel.

Point three: This is the strongest point from and for our Christian perspective. Jesus Christ himself, as recorded by Matthew, believed that the book of Daniel was authentic. Matthew 24:15 says, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"

May we also understand. Biblical prophecy is for real. We should be careful how much we adhere to what some commentators say. We must study to show ourselves approved as students of the Bible. And, as difficult and confusing as Biblical prophecies may be, we should not dodge or neglect them.



# Viewpoints

Your Page in the Book of Life

By Laurie Iannaccone

**Editor's Note:** *Bro. Laurie sent this sermon to me a number of years ago and when going through some files I came across it and reread it and even though it is rather long I felt the Lord wanted me to share this with all of you and so with Bro. Laurie's consent I share this article with all of you and pray it will bless you as it did me.*

Have you ever had a "Eureka" experience? We all have them from time to time. A verse in the Bible jumps out in a new way. You suddenly see a depth in it that you had never known before. The words come alive. The new insight makes your heart beat faster and blows your mind away. I was re-examining chapter six of Hebrews for our home group one evening when it happened.

The Hebrew Christians had retreated from their previous vibrant faith. Soon after they had been enlightened, they had zealously "endured a hard struggle with sufferings". They experienced being "publicly exposed to abuse and affliction", sometimes as "partners with others so treated" (10:32-33). But now, they had "become dull of hearing" (5:11). It was like the church of Ephesus that Jesus warned in the Revelation (2:1-7). This condition had developed over time for both of them. The Hebrews had let their spiritual exercise program lapse. They had fallen back to their habitual Judaism. Instead of growing in spiritual maturity, they had become a case of arrested development. They were losing their ability to distinguish between good and evil (5:14). The writer of Hebrews warned them that their regression could lead to destruction. But he added, "*yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things that belong to salvation*" (6:9).

Then in a complete contrast to the severity of the warning, the readers of Hebrews were abruptly given one of the most optimistic statements of the Christian hope in scripture. Here is what had struck me with such force. "*God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love which you showed for His sake in serving the saints, as you still do*"(6:10). Their more recent failures did not erase their earlier good work. Even as they were being warned of the danger of falling away from God, they were told that God keeps alive the memory of their previous good deeds.

God remembers our good deeds even as he blots out our sins!

The "Book of Life" is a scriptural metaphor for the memory of God. How can you know what is on your page in the book of life? Do you know whether you have a page in that book? Can your name be erased from it? What part does God play in what is on that page? Do we have a part in what is written there? Is there anything we can do to clean our page of charges against us? How can we deliberately add to that page or influence what God writes on it? My sudden illuminating experience helped me answer these questions.

When the seventy disciples came back excitedly reporting to Jesus how God had favored their ministry, they said, "Even the demons obeyed us." Jesus replied, "*Rejoice because your names are written in heaven*"(Lk. 10:20). Some years later the apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians lists several of his Christian men and women coworkers, Clement, Euodia and Syntyche, as having their names in the book of life. Most of us will never be as well known as these three; but we can all be fellow workers with such brethren. Paul, in fact, did not confine his list of names in the book to these more prominent ones. Instead, he also added to them, "*the rest of my fellow workers in the book of life*" (4:3). So, we each have a page under our name in the book of life.

John in the Revelation described the final judgment saying, "I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne." They were judged by what "*was written in the books, by what they had done*"(20:11-15). In John's vision of the future judgment, nothing now stood between them and God. Even the earth and the sky were gone. Each one stood fully exposed before the memory of God. What they had done was the issue.

In the epilogue John viewed our page in the book of life as our passport into the heavenly city. "*Nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life*"(21:27). Jesus promises, "*He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments and I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life*"(3:5). This tremendous promise is to every member of His body. The implicit serious warning is, as in Hebrews 6:4-8, overshadowed by the explicit better hope of our triumphant victory.

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Of those who overcome He says, "I will not blot his name out of the book of life, I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels". Jesus is saying to each of us, "I will not erase your name out of my book of life." On the other hand, the scriptures do tell us what is most often blotted out.

### Our Sins Are forgiven!

God speaking through Hosea expressed His love and His pain over the sins of His people as He asks, "Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death?" He answers His questions with the words Paul quoted later in reference to the coming resurrection (1Cor.15:54,55). "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting?" (13:14). God continued in Hosea telling us about His purposes: "Return ... to the Lord your God, you have stumbled because of your iniquity." ... "I will heal their faithlessness; I will love them freely, It is I who answer and look after you. From me comes your fruit." (14:1-8). Prophetically through Isaiah He says, "I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud your sins. Return to me for I have redeemed you" (44:22 NKJ).

Peter's Pentecost day promise announced the fulfillment of these promises. He urged them to accept, "the forgiveness of your sins." Paul frequently repeated this promise. "And you who were dead in trespasses, ... God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses" (Colossians 2:13). Romans quoting Psalm 32 says, "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon His sin". Hebrews reminds us of the words of Jeremiah, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." John in his introduction to the Revelation 1:5 wrote: "Jesus Christ ... loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood." (Acts 2:38; Colossians; 1:12-14; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 4:7,8; Jeremiah 31:34).

### Sins Forgiven Because of God Not Us

God blots out the record of our sins, not because of anything we do, but because of His unswerving love for us. As the psalmist wrote, "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us" (103:11,12). We cannot earn the forgiveness we need. It is ours because of God's own nature. His unwavering love is imbedded in His very nature. "Can a

woman forget her suckling child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold I have graven you - deeper and more permanent than any tattoo - on the palms of my hands" (Isaiah 49:15,16).

The writer of Hebrews also saw that God is true to His purposes for us even when we slacken in our spiritual exercise. We can be sure because God promised it. To secure His guarantee He took an oath using the best or highest model on which to fasten His pledge, His very self. He did this to give us absolute certainty in His purpose and so that we would be encouraged to seize the hope, He has set before us (Hebrews 6:13-18). In one of the most awesome statements in scripture God declared through Isaiah, "I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, And I will not remember your sins" (43:25).

### Laundering Our Page; Confession and Repentance:

God seldom answers our persistent "Why Lord?" questions. But He does explain His purposes in warning us about the danger of regressing. It is, "so that every one may turn from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin" (Jer. 31:34; 36:2). Peter on the day the Christian church was born urged his listeners to flee their evil generation and receive God's forgiveness. He said "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." A few days later He repeated the same message to the amazed people who had seen the healing of the lame man by the temple gate Beautiful. "Repent therefore, and turn again that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 2:38-40; 3:19). The Greek word for refreshing is also the word for revival. It is new life, and as Peter said on Pentecost, salvation from this crooked generation.

When I was a teenager I thought of salvation, forgiveness of sin, as a single event. One that takes place on a specific day as, for example, at one's baptism. A little later I understood that what begins as a critical event continues as a life long course, sanctification. John in his first letter writes, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive us (1:9). He is talking about a life of confession and repentance daily. John's context describes our walk as ongoing in the light of fellowship with one another and as being cleansed of sin by the blood of Jesus. Our con-

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tinuing need is met by God's arrangement for blotting out our transgressions, as the Holy Spirit reveals them to us. The apostles understood these were nonstop processes of walking in the way.

But confession does not mean avoiding the "S" word by substituting some less harsh word for it. That avoidance is how we excuse ourselves. Examples are: a false step, a boo-boo, a gaffe, error, blunder, slip-up, miscalculation, flaw, oversight, mistake, false move, misstep, and inaccuracy. We too easily explain ourselves in sentences such as, "It's my weakness," "I didn't mean it," and "that's the way I am". Instead, I know continual cleansing in heaven, so long as I am willing to call sin, "sin" and turn away from it by confession and repentance. Confessing is more than simply admitting. Beyond the acknowledgment of the fact, it requires an expressed regret of the fact and the commitment to change in confidence that results in transformed behavior. Undoing the past is beyond us. However, repentance implies a willingness to undo whatever we can that has resulted from our sins. Repentance entails regret that in confidence leads to changed behavior.

The list in Galatians 5:19-21 are the obvious practices of persons not guided by the Holy Spirit. And Paul's warning that the love of money is the root of all evils was never more appropriate than today (1Tim. 6:10). The world has never before known a wealthier era. No empire ever had as much material affluence as the western world and especially the United States today. The "Baby-Boomers" are the richest in human record. The present decade's abundance in material goods is beyond any previous ten years in human history. Jesus' warned us saying, "*the cares of the world and the pleasure and delight and glamour and deceitfulness of riches choke and suffocate the Word*" (Matt. 13:22, amplified). The self-deluding semantic soft denial of sin by calling it something else is self-defeating. The blood of the cross is the eraser God provided to "*forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1Jn. 1:9).

Jesus died for us and continues to hold that eraser out to us. Our on-going need for cleansing from sin is continually met by God's arrangement for blotting out our transgressions. Jesus continuously intercedes for us. His blood is the cover that blots out our particular sins of any day, any hour or minute. Jesus continuously restores our relationship to our Father. Before the face of our Daddy, our Abba, at the

heavenly throne, the real "mercy seat", Jesus acts as our mediator for "*He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*" (Heb. 7:25; Rev. 5:6)

We also know when we need to use the eraser. We have at least two signals of our need: one in our internal relationships and the other in our external relations. Each of us has within himself **the referee's whistle**, although no one else may hear it. The loss of inner peace, our sense of spiritually triumphing or our joy in the Holy Spirit, tells us that matters between us and God are not right. This sometimes takes the form of a loss of trust in the intercession of Jesus for us. The external cue is easier for others to measure. It is a distancing of ourselves from our brethren whether in closeness of relating to them or in a decline in meeting together, as Hebrews 10:25 warned against. These alarms are not given us to make us feel guilty about matters, but so that we can act on them. As God told Jeremiah, "*so that every one may turn from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin*" (Jer. 31:34; 36:2).

The promises of: forgiveness, the covering of sin and being free in God's eyes assume we deal with our sin honestly. So, too the guaranteed blessing of the thirty-second Psalm assumes a person "*in whose spirit there is no deceit*" (Psalm 32:1,2). It is easier to deceive ourselves alone than in open sharing with others who love us. Our part in the cleansing process is often a shared one. We do not walk our journey alone. John in his first letter, 1:5-9, says it is a walk with Jesus in fellowship with one another. James briefly and precisely describes this process and its results. He says, "*the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed*" (Jas. 5:15 & 16). This need for sharing our sins and our hurts is one of the reasons for small group worship, like home groups, small study, prayer groups, and mutual ministry teams. These provide Christians the means of giving and receiving loving care and interchangeable support in their journey. The openness of sharing secures the integrity of the process.

## Adding Good Reports to Our Page

God always keeps the memory of our good conduct before Himself! So Malachi calls the book of life "a book of remembrance". He re-



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veals what it contains. "Thus did those who reverence the Lord talk to one another, so that the Lord gave heed and listened. And a book of remembrance was written before him, concerning those who revere the Lord and think upon his name. So they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, On the day that I am about to make - my very own; and I will spare them even as a man spares his son who serves him. Then shall you again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves God, and him who serves him not." (3:16-18). The Hebrews were like these of whom Malachi wrote. They had rejoiced in their mutual suffering for Christ even in the face of persecution. And God had written their previous services on their pages in His memory. "For God is not so unjust as to forget the work you have done and the love you have showed for His cause, in giving help to your fellow Christians" (Hebrews 6:10, Goodspeed). In their early prison ministry they had such compassion on their imprisoned brethren that they had, "joyfully accepted the plundering of [their] property," knowing that they had "a better possession and an abiding one." (Hebrews 10:32-36). There are at least three rules here: 1) Doing good to all; 2) keeping alive the memory of our best deeds and God's blessings and 3) The models God has given you:

1<sup>st</sup>. "Do good to all especially the household of faith" (Gal.6:10). We are encouraged to show the same love in serving one another as we had in our first days in Christ. Jesus said, "all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Our ordinary good deeds for Christ's sake are written on our page. Examples of these ordinary kind actions are: smiles, loving greetings and hugs sharing the love for one another in Jesus (Matthew 10:42; John 13:35). In the same way similar kind behavior to others in our daily life of work, shopping, meetings on the street, and in all we do reflecting the love of Jesus has effects on them and adds to our page. In the parable of the sheep and the goats those approved of by the Lord had fed the hungry, welcomed strangers, covered the naked, visited the sick and ministered to prisoners. Nor is this an exhaustive list. Jesus views giving a cup of water to the least of His disciples as kingdom work (Matt. 25:31-46).

The Hebrews had done such things even in the face of persecution. God was keeping their previous services in His memory. "For God is

not so unjust as to forget the work you have done." (Hebrews 6:10) Their prison ministry had such compassion on their brethren in prison that they had, "joyfully accepted the plundering of [their] property," knowing that they had "a better possession and an abiding one." It is in doing these sorts of ordinary good deeds for Christ's sake that we write on our page in the book. (Goodspeed; Matthew 10:42; 25:31-46; Hebrews 10:32-36)

2<sup>nd</sup> The Hebrews were also urged to "recall the former days when," they had endured a hard struggle. We are likewise asked, to keep the memory of our best deeds before us so as to stimulate us to continue in well doing.

3<sup>rd</sup>. We are also urged to take the best models we know and to imitate them. Note and keep in memory and prayer the best examples you know, as Paul did in his letter to the Philipians (Hebrews 10:32; Philipians 3:17)

God keeps our good deeds before him, in His memory on our page in the book of life. And He encourages us to erase sin from our page by constantly holding out to us the blood of the sacrifice He made available through the death of His son. Let us keep our page clean by using that eraser in a daily life of confession and repentance of sin as the Holy Spirit reveals it to us. God writes on our page with imperishable ink, as we do the will of God in our daily ordinary lives. "A satisfactory page in the book of life is written by: confession, repentance and a glass of water."



*"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14*



# Ebenezers

## A Lamb Without Blemish

by Jon Larson

In scripture, the first person to speak of a lamb is Isaac. On the journey to Mt. Moriah, Isaac innocently inquires of his father Abraham, *"Where is the lamb for sacrifice?"* Gen. 22:7 A lamb for sacrifice was something he learned from his father, and then taught to his son Jacob, who in turn taught it to his twelve sons, and so on. By the time of the Egyptian bondage, the Hebrews would surely have expected there to be the use of a lamb for the Passover sacrifice to the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. My friends, Stephen points out a very salient fact to our understanding of these things. It was four hundred years of evil entreatment these people endured. Acts 7:6 Still through it all, the Hebrews held firm in their belief to the words and traditions handed down to them, even after they wound up in cruel bondage.

BONDAGE! The day in, day out drudgery of slavery, making bricks by spreading straw over mud and then stomping your feet into that mixture thousands of times a day. Not your cup of tea? Well, how about dragging enormous stones through miles and miles of desert sand, or any of the other multitude of mindlessly inane jobs given to slaves? Bondage means your choices are obey or die, as you toil and sweat under a cruel taskmaster, snapping his whip on your back. Oh my, oh my, YES!! the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob cried out in utter agony to their God for deliverance from their oppression in Egypt.

The God of their fathers heard their cry, and sent to them Moses out of Midian. The Hebrews quickly became filled with the hope of a swift deliverance from their long and cruel bondage, but, as we all must sooner or later learn, God has His own his ways, His own timetable, and our Heavenly Father always knows what time it is. From the perspective of His children, deliverance came at a excruciatingly slow pace, yet from His perspective, deliverance came at the due time. Personally, I probably would have gone with three plagues

and you're out. Thankfully, God knows best and He determined ten plagues before deliverance would come. Who am I to second guess the God of creation?

All the plagues followed the same basic format. Moses would tell Pharaoh, *"Let my people go or a plague."* Each time Pharaoh ultimately refused, until after the tenth. OH, WOW, that tenth plague was the coup de grace of all plagues! You see, rivers of blood, frogs, lice, flies, boils, hail, fire, locusts, and darkness were not enough to change the mind and heart of Pharaoh. However, the death of the their firstborns was able to do what the first nine plagues could not do. YIKES! It seems almost unbelievable what a cold, hard, unyielding heart Pharaoh had within him.

On a very particular evening in Egypt, all firstborn who did not follow very particular instructions would die, dead as a doornail, dead. The first instruction was to clean out all leaven from your home. The next instruction was to select a young lamb, without blemish and without spot, and then bring that lamb into your home. Okay, consider bringing a lamb into your home and you have young children. Undoubtedly, your children would surely regard the lamb as their pet, give it a name, care for it, and probably even ride it. Therefore, when the fourteenth day of the first month came, the father would have a truly heartbreaking task to perform. Dad would have to slaughter Flossy, while his kids were screaming and crying their eyes out for their beloved pet. I sometimes think that we can get so engrossed in certain details of a story, that we don't reflect on the heart wrenching human dramas being played out, and the true to life consequences entailed therein.

However, for the firstborn within their home to live, Dad had no choice. The Bible explains, *"Through faith Moses kept the Passover."* Heb. 11:28 Obviously, it took great faith to spread, specifically using hyssop as a brush, the blood of their lamb over the doorposts and lintel of their home. I can personally assure you that spread-

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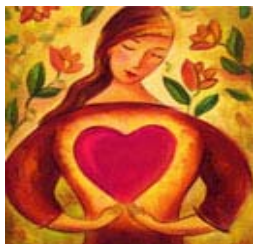
ing blood with hyssop is quite a messy process. The entrance to that home could not have been inviting or pretty, but that's the way it needed to be done. The whole lamb was to be roasted over a fire, and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. You also needed to eat the lamb with your loins girded, shoes on your feet, staff in hand, and no dilly-dallying because this was the Lord's Passover. After following, through faith, their detailed instructions, VOILA! It was just as the Lord said it would be: *"When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be on you."* Ex. 12:13

Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ has admonished his disciples, *"Beware the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."* Luke 12:1 The dictionary lists three synonyms for hypocrite: deceiver, pretender, Pharisee. Therefore, we find the words Pharisee and hypocrite, in our time, have become totally interchangeable.

YIKES! No wonder Paul implores us to, *"Purge out the old leaven...for indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us."* 1 Cor. 5:8

No deceiving, no pretending, no baloney or any of that other Pharisee leaven for the church of the firstborn. No, no, no, rather, as true disciples of Jesus, we need to purge that leaven out of our hearts, while at the same time we eat the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Yes, yes, yes to bringing in the holy lamb of God into our hearts, *"With the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish and without spot."* 1 Pet. 1:19 PRAISE GOD from whom all blessings flow! John the Baptist was absolutely spot on when he saw Jesus and proclaimed to all, *"Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"* John 1:29

Bottom line: Today, it is just as the Lord said so long ago, *"When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be on you."* Ex. 12:13



## A Daughter's Heart God's Plan for my Life... By Charmaine Thorfeldt

Soon after we bought our new church building, Lynnette gathered a few women together to make banners for the front wall of the sanctuary. Between the ones we had up for Christmas and the ones we have up for Easter, we have two that have always puzzled me and made me think.

The one on the left reads "God's love" with a silver anchor stitched to a blue background. Why an anchor? Why not a heart? That's what I think of when I think of love. How can an anchor represent God's love?

Well, an anchor holds a ship in one place and keeps it from drifting and I guess God's love does do that. Knowing how great this love is makes me feel safe and secure.

But the other banner says "and peace" and has a dove with lifted wings appliquéd on a similar blue



background. Doesn't this mean freedom and adventure? Isn't this the opposite of secure? The idea of adventure scares me. In fact, the older I get, the less adventure I seem to desire. I don't want

change.

Yet I don't have to fear the new stuff that comes into my life. Because of the great love of God, I know He is always there. He is my security but through the new situations in my life, He also wants me to change, to grow, to become more and more like Jesus.

These two banners picture God's plan for my life and they remind me of a poster I used to have:

God loves me just the way I am but  
loves me too much to let me stay  
that way!



# Eric's Epiphanies

## TITHING

By Eric Honea

I hear much said in the Christian community about the principle of tithing which means giving a tenth. When the children of Israel were given the law they were told to give a tenth of their harvest and livestock to Yahweh. This is an oversimplification since the study of tithing under the law of Moses is actually quite complicated. Depending on which Old Testament passage is read we see tithes were given to the priests and Levites, to the poor and strangers, and some were even eaten at festival gatherings. Many scholars believe there was a second [or even a third] tithe mandated by scripture, an interpretation which is also recorded in Jewish traditional literature. There are a number of Old Testament verses which talk about giving above and beyond tithing as an act of love and devotion to God.

What should we as New Testament Christians practice in giving to God? First it is worth pointing out that there are no New Testament verses which tell Christians to give a tenth. This part of the Old Law was never reinstated for Christians just as a hundred other rules were never reinstated. We are not told specifically how our gifts are to be collected or distributed. However we do have many statements about and examples of giving in the New Testament. Let's look at these statements and examples to learn the general message and spirit of Christianity and then begin to put it into practice.

Matt 5:42 "Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."

Matt 6:3-4 "...when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Matt 19:21 "Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Matt 25:37-40 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing

clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Luke 12:32-34 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Luke 14:12-14 "Then Jesus said to his host, 'When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'"

Rom 12:7-8 "...if it [a man's gift] is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously."

2 Cor 8:3-15 "For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will....For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich....Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: 'He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little.'"

2 Cor 9:6-15 "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give,



## Eric's Epiphanies continued from page 8

not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

1 Cor 16:2 "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

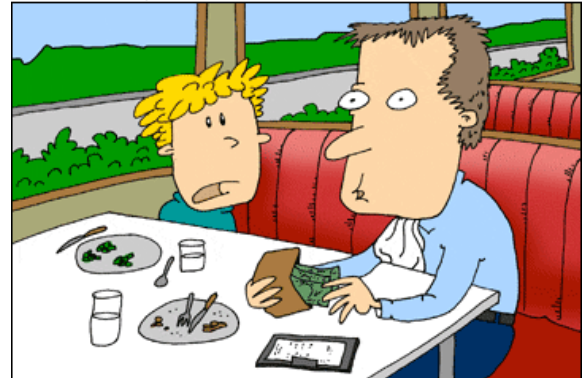
Gal 6:10 "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

James 1:27 "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

**CONCLUSION:** Regarding tithing let's remember that "the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ" Gal 3:24. Did we learn what we should have from the old law? When we recognize

that everything we have belongs to God: our time, our money, and our bodies and we give all we have seeking the kingdom first then we are ready to graduate. Clearly that first group of Christians had graduated for we read in Acts 4:32-37 "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need." This was Christianity's finest hour. When we give generously, when we give to restore equality among us, when we give expecting a reward greater than the gift, then we graduate from the old law and go our way rejoicing!

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Thanks to Shirley Ostrander

01-15-2004

HOW COME THE WAITRESS GETS 15% AND GOD ONLY GETS 10%?

*"I have held many things in my hand, and have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands that I still possess."*

*- Martin Luther*



# Beside Still Waters...

Reflecting God's Glory by Donna Mathewson

*"And we with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect; this is the work of the Lord who is Spirit."*

2 Corinthians 3:18 JB



When I first read this translation I thought, "I don't ever remember reading this verse before." The reason for this is because the translations that I was familiar with use the word "beholding" rather than reflecting. Actually, the Greek word *katoptrizō* can be translated either way. Perhaps the LORD meant that word to be used for just that reason. The only way we can reflect God is to behold God. We cannot mirror His image if we have never seen Him. When Moses went to meet God on Mount Sinai, he came down from the mountaintop reflecting God's glory. He had been in the mountaintop



*"When Moses came down from Mount Sinai...he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him...he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD."*

– Exodus 34:29-35

communing with God for 40 days and 40 nights according to Scripture. When he finally descended, the glory of God so radiated from him that the people could not bear to look at his face. He had to wear a veil on his face because the light that reflected from him blinded the people. The glory that shown from Moses' face faded with time and he was able to remove the veil. There is an important lesson for us in this story. We need to continually behold the Father if we wish to be able reflect His glory continually. It is not a one-time deal. If we stop "beholding" God, His glory will begin to fade away. If we wish to maintain His reflection, we need to be continually beholding Him. Paul tells us that we do not need to veil our faces; to do so would hide the fact that we have been with God. We are to shine with the glory of God, reflect His love and character to all with whom we come in contact. Do you remember the story of Stephen's interrogation by the council of Jewish leaders in Acts 6:15? *"And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."* We might not exhibit, like Stephen, a literal glowing face when we are giving our testimony of knowing God and His dear Son, but as our text indicated we will grow brighter and brighter over time as we reflect the image that we behold. The more time we spend with God, the brighter our countenance will grow: others will notice it, for we will shine!

*Father, help us to spend more time with you, to behold you and then to reflect you to the world. Help us to see you in all your beauty and majesty and then let us go forth into the world and shine. We cannot live on the mountaintop forever, Lord, so help us to go forth into the world and enable our very countenance to invite others to join us on the mountaintop and worship you together! Amen*



# Camp Blessing 2011



## Wausau, WI

Work Weekend	Kent Urbaniak	June 2-5
Special Person's	TBD	June 19-24
Special Person Day Camp	David Karavas	July 11-15
Children's Camp	Tim & Rachel Chabot	July 17-23
Teen Camp	Tim & Stacey Allen	July 24-30
Canoe Retreat	Mike Fischer	Aug 12-14
Women's Retreat	Charmaine Thorfeldt, April & Autumn Skorup	Sept 23-25

## California

Spring Retreat	David & Tracie Elliott	June 10-12
Fall Retreat	Larry & Joyce Urbaniak	Oct 8-10

For 2011 Applications please go to the Camp Blessing Website and download the application: [www.campblessing.com](http://www.campblessing.com)

## Bible Quiz

## Who was she?



1. The eldest daughter of Laban. Gen. 29:16
2. She complained to Jesus about her sister. Luke 10:38-40
3. The second daughter of King Saul. I Sam. 14:49
4. She was the mother of Seth. [Not Donna]. Gen. 4:1, 25
5. A Christian whom Peter brought back to life. Acts 9:36-41
6. She was the sister of Aaron. Ex. 15:20
7. The mother of Obed. Matt. 1:5
8. A widow who served God in the temple. Luke 2:36-37
9. She married Isaac. Gen 24:67
10. She sold "purple" [cloth]. Acts 16:14

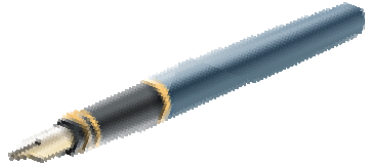




# Of Interest...

## Attendance

**March 13—110**  
**March 20—101**  
**March 27—101**  
**April 3—111**



## Upcoming Speakers & Studies

**May 1**  
**Food Pantry**  
**May Convention**  
Sermon—Ron Frye  
Testimony—Steve Teunis  
Sermon—Wayne Urbaniak

**May 8**  
Sermon—Mike Knapp  
“Are Your Thoughts Captive?”  
Andy Weeks

**May 15**  
Sermon—“Number Your Days”  
Larry Urbaniak  
Topic Discussion—Andy Weeks  
11:35 Business Meeting

**May 22**  
Sermon—“Pick Your Priorities”  
Joe Funari  
Topic Discussion—Andy Weeks

**May 29**  
Sermon—“Managing Your Time”  
David Elliott  
Topic Discussion—Andy Weeks

**June 5**  
Sermon—Andy Weeks  
Topic Discussion—“Rethinking the Prodigal”—Larry Urbaniak

**June 12**  
Sermon—Steve Teunis  
Topic Discussion—“Rethinking the Prodigal”—Larry Urbaniak

**June 19**  
**Picnic Sunday 10:AM**  
Sermon—Dennis Thorfeldt

**June 26**  
Sermon—Mike Knapp  
Question Meeting—Joe Funari

## Mark your Calendars...

- ♦ May 22—Business Meeting
- ♦ June 19th—Father’s Day Picnic
- ♦ July 2-9—Berean Christian Conference  
Theme: Thy Kingdom Come
- ♦ August 3-7—Christian Believer’s Conference  
Theme: “In All Things Christ”

## Sunday Services

Prayer Meeting- 8:15AM  
Worship- 9:00AM  
Sermon- 9:30AM  
Second Service-10:30-11:30AM  
Sunday School-10:15AM  
Study/Youth For Truth-10:30AM



**First Monday of the Month**  
Men’s Meeting at Church, 6:30PM

**Tuesdays**  
Weekly—Church, 10:30AM  
Every Other Tuesday—Church, Revelation, 7:00PM  
Alternating Tuesdays—Pioneer Club at Church, 6:15PM  
Every Other Tuesday—Women’s Meeting—Church 12-2PM

**Thursdays**  
Weekly—Women’s Meeting—Church, Exodus, 7:00PM  
Weekly—Joe Knapp’s Home, 6:45PM

